VOL. IV. Numb. 23.

The Athenian Mercury.

Queſt. 1. *WHether the Marriage of Couſin Germans be lawful?*

Anſw. We have already anſwer'd this Queſtion in the Negative. See *Vol. N.*

Queſt. 2. *Whether in point of Conſcience as well as Law, upon my Preſentation of a Clerk to a Living, I may require of him a Bond to reſign the Living at my Pleaſure, and upon my Demand: And whether there be any thing in the Oath of Simony, or in the Authority of the Biſhop over his Clergy, or otherwiſe, that ſhould diſable the Clerk from giving ſuch Bonds; and whether I may be in danger of Forfeiture by taking it?*

Anſw. If the Gentleman deſerves the Living as well as any other, you can't repent giving it him abſolutely, ſince there's no ſelling it; if you are not ſatisfied in him you may let him officiate till you and the Congregation can be better accommodated, only this in the mean time that he Officiates let not the leaſt part of the Rights of proper *Incumbent* be detained from him; in ſo doing we think you act ſafely, and are at your freedom, but for taking Bonds, &c. we know no Preſidents for it, and therefore 'tis impracticable.

Queſt. 3. *A Gentleman tho' Married makes his Addreſſes to a young Lady, concealing his Marriage, not deſigning any thing diſhonourable by her, but purely out of a deſire to gain her Acquaintance, being Charmed by her Converſation. His Wife is ſince ſome conſiderable time Dead, and he extreamly Melancholy, which was imputed to the memory of his Loſs: But being privately watched he has been heard to repeat ſeveral Sentences relating to Love, which are ſuppoſed to be expreſs'd in his Letters formerly written to the Lady, and with a great deal of Paſſion when in private, ſighing, abruptly calls upon her Name, uſing ſeveral other Expreſſions of Love, even almoſt to Madneſs. But being Cenſured by her Relations for his former Intrigue during his Marriage; and diſſwaded by his own Friends from entertaining any Thoughts of Love now, 'tis feared by his Actions that he will make ſome deſperate attempt upon himſelf, if not by continual watching, or other means prevented. Your Advice therefore Gentlemen, is ſpeedily deſired, and what you think may be the readieſt way to divert his Malady: And whether the young Lady may not without any cauſe of reflection upon her Honour entertain him, notwithſtanding his former fault (as they are pleas'd to term it) provided his Perſon, Fortune, &c. be not diſagreeable?*

Anſw. This is a very uncommon *Relation*, but if it is the utmoſt that has paſs'd, we think both the Queriſt and the Lady may proceed honourably enough to the higheſt Bond of Friendſhip: For things are, as they are in their own Nature, and not what prejudices of Cuſtom, and the groundleſs Opinions of the Age repreſent 'em.

Queſt. 4. *Can they who Study the Black Art, otherwiſe called Conjurers, or in a word any who deal with the Devil tell any Perſon the Event of his Life abſolutely, that is, without the Maxim held by all Aſtrologers,* (viz.) Aſtra regunt Homines, ſed regit Aſtra Deus. *And further, I deſire your Thoughts upon the heinouſneſs of the Sin, particularly in order to deter a Friend of mine from committing it, but more eſpecially the whole Kingdom, a great part of which do too often uſe it, your Anſwer ſpeedily leſt it comes too late, as to my part.*

Anſw. 'Tis the incommunicable Attribute of God to know things to come, all knowledge that Men or the Devil himſelf has of Futurities are owing to the Prophecies in Sacred Writ, or elſe the Quick Correſpondence that Devils keep, they can give notice a Week, a Fortnight, nay many Weeks (if the Voyage is long enough) before any *ordinary Poſt or Meſſage* can, or elſe the Devil knows from *Natural Cauſes* as thus, ſuch and ſuch *Cauſes* have always produc'd ſuch and ſuch *Effects*, and muſt do it again; but for *Men, Devils, Spirits, Angels*, &c. to know Futurities from an immediate Principle of Fore-knowledge in themſelves is an impoſſibility, and thoſe perſons that ſuppoſe it, and practiſe either by themſelves or others are abus'd, and know not what an impious folly they are guilty of.

Queſt. 5. *An old Countrey Gentleman of about Sixty, upon the ſight of a Gay Lady above Twenty, whether it was by Sympathy or otherwiſe, found ſuch Locomotive Faculties perplex him in ſome peculiar parts that nothing could ſatisfie his Appetite but Enjoyment, for the obtaining of which, he Careſs'd, Vow'd, Sung, Danced, Treated, and what was ſtill more Efficacious, he preſented to the higheſt degree, Gold Watches, Pearls, Guinies, and all things that might win the Charming Fort, which had ſo powerful an Operation, that after having view'd the pleaſing Fort, &c. he was promiſed by the Governeſs a Surrender in a ſhort time. Now in the Interim he finds his former Paſſions to be but empty, and he wants the power to become Victorious, deſires your Opinion which way he may beſt ſerve the Lady, hide his own Inability, preſerve his Honour, and yet not beg the help of any Neighbouring Garriſon.*

Anſw. We know no better way for the Gentleman than to make as honourable a relinquiſhment of his pretences as he can, for Nature can't, won't—

Queſt. 6. *Two Gentlemen of the Proteſtant Church falling lately into Diſcourſe. Among other things the One Aſſerted that there was a Motion before the Creation, the Other that there was not; your Opinion.*

Anſw No; *Creation* ſuppoſes a making ſomething out of nothing, and nothing cou'd move or be moved before it had a Being.

Queſt.

Queſt. 7. *Why do Parrots, Magpies, &c. talk, when ſeveral other Birds cannot, if the ſame means be uſed?*

Anſw. From a Natural Inſtinct of imitating Sounds, and not as ſome believe from a proper formation of their Tongue, for if it lay in the Tongue, then the likeſt to Mens were the moſt proper, as a *Dog*, *Cat*, and other Quadrupedes wou'd ſpeak better than *Parrots*.

Queſt. 8. *There is a certain thing in* Wales, *and I am told ſeen no where but in the Dioceſs of St.* Davis, *called in the Britiſh Tongue* Tan-Corph, *Engliſh* Fetch-Candle; *'tis a certain Fire that is ſeen before the death of any perſon, generally believed to proceed from the very Body it ſelf, ſometime before he dies, and often before he ſickens, and obſerved to go all along the way the Corps is afterwards to be carried to the place of Burial, tho' it be through a River, and over the Grave ſeen to Vaniſh with a little ruſhling noiſe; it's bigger or leſſer, redder or paler in proportion to the perſon to deceaſe: There are many things ſaid of it by the Natives, and ſuch Circumſtances as are very amazing, too long to inſert, but that there is ſuch a thing is paſt doubt, my ſelf being once an Eye-witneſs of it: Now I would fain know your Sentiments concerning it, and as ſoon as conveniently you can.*

Anſw. 'Tis poſſible this may be a Truth, but before we ſearch for a reaſon, we deſire to be ſatisfied from ſuch Perſons that are Inhabitants there, whoſe deceaſed Relations have been concerned in this Account, and who are themſelves Perſons of Credit and Judgment, and by conſequence not apt either to impoſe, or be impos'd upon by prejudices a ſtrength of fancy, if we get a ſubſcription of ſuch Perſons, we'll give all the ſatisfaction we are able to our Queriſt.

Queſt. 9. *Whether it is a Sin for a Surgeon to Cure the Venereal Diſeaſe? The occaſion of the Queſtion is this; The Queriſt is ſpeedily deſign'd for ſome Employment; but amongſt all that have been propos'd, that of a Chirurgeon pleaſes him beſt: But he knowing that Diſeaſe to be one of the chief Hinges on which that Profeſſion depends, has deferr'd his Anſwer till he hears from you, whether it is lawful, without offending God, to Cure it, ſince it ſeems deſign'd by him, as a puniſhment for thoſe Offenders.*

Anſw. There's no Sickneſs in the World but 'tis for the puniſhment of ſome Sin, now we are commanded, *To uſe the Phyſician for God hath Created him:* 'Tis true, ſome ſort of Cures are eſteem'd more honourable than others, becauſe the Irregularities that caus'd 'em may not be in ſo ill Reputation as others; as for inſtance, thoſe that proceed from Drunkenneſs, Intemperance, *&c.* The Body is the Organ of the Soul, and (next to Gods Glory in the Workmanſhip of it) is Created for the uſe of the Soul, ſo that 'tis ſuppos'd whatever kindneſs is offer'd to the Body to make it more apt to diſcharge the Functions of the Soul, it is to be look'd upon as ſerviceable to the Soul, if the uſe of it is miſ-imployed the Owners themſelves are accountable for that, and not ſuch as make 'em able to continue in Wickedneſs, God himſelf does immediately give Life and Health to ill Men, and will exact an account of the diſpoſing of it. Divines and Phyſicians are the great Imitators of God himſelf.

Queſt. 10. *A Perſon about ſome Ten or Eleven years ſince walking in his Ground in the Country, heard the crying of a young Child, and drawing near to the noiſe, perceived it to be a young Infant naked; pity moved him to take it up, ſeeing no body near it, and carrying it home, Nurſed it for about the ſpace of ſix Months, one Morning the Child lying in the Cradle as they thought aſleep, four or five people being near it, ſomething rapped at the Window, the Child and the reſt hearing of it, the Infant ſpoke, which it was never heard to do before, ſaying,* My Daddy Calls, *and immediately Vaniſhes out of the Cradle, and was never ſince ſeen or heard of; now pray Gentlemen give your Anſwer as full to the Point as may be reſolving whether it was Fleſh and Blood, or Indued with an Immortal Soul or not.*

Anſw. Pray ſend to us the Name of the Place and Perſons where this happened, for the Relation is too ſtrange, eſpecially ſince 'tis *anonymous* for us to give any Credit to it.

Queſt. 11. *How our Bleſſed Saviour is ſaid to be from* David, *there being no Genealogy of the Virgin* Mary *in Holy Writ, from whom in reſpect of the Fleſh we are to reckon our Saviour?*

Anſw. Tho' the Virgin *Mary*'s Lineage is not expreſt, yet it may by conſequence be made out, that ſhe alſo was the Daughter of *David*; for 'tis well known that the Jews always Married into their Own Tribe and Family; which conſider'd, our Saviour being the Son of the Virgin *Mary* was alſo the Son of *David*.

Queſt. 12. *I preſume you have heard of (if not ſeen) that Noctelucent Inſect call'd Λαμπυρὶς, or the Glow-worm; two of which I brought from the Hedges out of the Country to* London *with me, you'd very much oblige me, and doubtleſs (ſome) others with your Conjectures, concerning the Reaſon of that great Light that little part of the Tail gives? whether it is an igneous, or what ſubſtance, or no? [I'm for the Negative, becauſe they feel ſo frigid in one's hand] or from whence they contract that ſplendor? I obſerve they can ceaſe ſhining at pleaſure, and that they ſhine more or leſs as they pleaſe, which for your better or ſpeedier ſatisfaction, (if your Learned Society will be pleaſed to accept of one, it ſhall be ſent in a Box with Graſs, or how you pleaſe, unto you.)*

Anſ. Your Opinion is exact; for further Experiments of this Nature we refer you to what Sir *Tho. Brown* has writ in his Vulgar Errors.

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